

# News Release

# Senator Pete V. Domenici

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## COMMITTEE BACKS DOMENICI'S REQUEST TO FULLY FUND AIRBORNE LASER PROGRAM

### Action Sets Stage for Actual Funding for Kirtland AFB Program

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Senator Pete Domenici today praised Senate committee action to override the Clinton administration's proposal to cut \$94 million from the Airborne Laser (ABL) program next year, and said he is ready to work to provide funding for the program in this year's appropriations process.

The Senate Armed Services Committee today approved the FY2001 Defense Authorization Bill, which recommends funding levels for Department of Defense projects like the ABL program at Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque. The bill next goes to the full Senate for consideration.

The committee-approved authorizing bill follows Domenici's February request to fully authorize the ABL program at \$242.8million for 2001, a \$94.2 million increase above the \$148.6 million requested by President Clinton in his budget submission to Congress.

ABL is managed by the Air Force Research (Phillips) Laboratory at Kirtland.

"The Armed Services Committee did its work and now I'm ready to see that we provide full funding, at the authorized level, for the Airborne Laser program," Domenici said. "The ABL program is integral to our national security quest to develop and demonstrate the technologies that will be needed to eventually deploy effective missile defenses."

"There are a lot of things I think need to be improved in this bill. I want to carefully consider the committee's authorization levels for defense work conducted by the Energy Department and out national laboratories," Domenici said. "We will have to work on when this bill gets to the Senate floor."

ABL is currently the nation's most promising and revolutionary ballistic missile defense (BMD) system. It has met or is exceeding all technical requirements, while remaining on budget and on schedule. If the committee had followed Clinton's lead, the Air Force projects a two-year delay in the lethality demonstrations and millions in added cost.

Domenici serves on the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee that will develop the actual funding for Defense Department activities. The FY2001 Defense Appropriations Bill is expected to be considered by the full Senate Appropriations Committee on May 18.

The \$309 billion FY2001 Defense Authorization Bill includes the following authorized levels, which are subject to appropriations in the FY 2001 Defense Appropriations Bill. (Note: Domenici is a member of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.)

**Army Warfighter Information Network:** \$174 million authorized, \$60 million above Clinton's budget request, for mobile command and control shelters. Laguna Industries, the largest employer for Laguna Pueblo, manufactures these shelters. Domenici requested this funding increase in February.

**Counter-Terrorism Technical Support program:** An additional \$3 million is authorized for the Counter-Terrorism Technical Support program, supporting the cutting-edge research in blast mitigation materials and structures at New Mexico Tech. Overall, this program is authorized at \$44.1 million for 2001.

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**DOE Nonproliferation Research:** \$255 million is authorized for Department of Energy nonproliferation research, a \$30 million increase over the president's budget request. Domenici requested such an increase in February.

**Advanced Spacecraft Technology, Kirtland AFB:** \$144 million, a \$47 million increase above the president's budget request, for advanced spacecraft programs at Kirtland AFB, including: \$5 million for the Scorpius Low-Cost Launch program; \$15 million for the Military Space Plane, and \$5 million for the Solar Orbital Transfer Vehicle Space Experiment.

**Air Force Operational Test & Evaluation Center (AFOTEC):** \$28.2 million is authorized for the AFOTEC's independent operational tests to evaluate weapon systems operational effectiveness and suitability, including new aircraft. This funding supports research and testing, ongoing operations and maintenance, and the military personnel payroll.

**High Energy Laser Systems Test Facility (HELSTF):** The Armed Services Committee adhered to Clinton's budget request, authorizing \$14.5 million for HELSTF (\$19.7 million less than FY2000 funding), \$1 million for the solid state laser program at WSMR (\$19 million less than FY2000). The committee did authorize a \$15 million increase for the Theater High Energy Laser (THEL) at HELSTF. Domenici has sought authorization for funding increases in each of these programs.

**Army Test Ranges and Facilities:** \$119.7 million authorized for this activity for upgrades and instrumentation for testing centers. Also, \$20 million was added for Central Test and Evaluation Investment Development. WSMR would share in the use of this funding.

**Science and Technology:** \$446.3 million was added for defense Science and Technology research, a 9 percent increase.

**Counter-Drug Activities:** \$1.1 billion for counter-drug activities within the Defense Department and \$25 million for National Guard counter drug operations.

**Department of Energy (DOE) Atomic Energy Defense Activities:** \$12.8 billion for Atomic Energy Defense activities of the Department of Energy (DOE), a \$697.0 million increase over fiscal year 2000 funding levels. The levels authorized amount reflects a net reduction of \$323.6 million to the president's request. Reductions were taken principally from the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program and defense environmental management privatization.

**National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA):** \$6.2 billion for NNSA activities, in the following programs:

\$4.7 billion for **weapons activities**, which is a \$78.8 million increase over the budget request, and an increase of \$332.1 million over fiscal year 2000 levels;

\$847.0 million for **defense nuclear nonproliferation activities**, which is \$59.0 million below the budget request, and a decrease of \$2.3 million below fiscal year 2000 levels; and

\$695.0 million for **naval reactors activities**, which is a \$17.4 million increase over the budget request, and an increase of \$19.9 million over fiscal year 2000 levels.

**Defense Environmental Restoration and Waste Management:** \$6.3 billion for defense environmental restoration and waste management (including defense facilities closure projects and defense environmental management privatization), which is \$132.0 million below the budget request, and an increase of \$356.4 million over fiscal year 2000 levels.

**Other Defense Activities:** \$466.3 million for other defense activities, which is \$88.8 million below the budget request, and equal to fiscal year 2000 funding levels.

**Tritium Production:** An additional \$34.0 million provided to continue progress on restoring tritium production;

**Pit Production:** \$10 million added to to begin conceptual design on a new pit production capability.

**NNSA Counterintelligence:** \$30.0 million added to enhance counterintelligence at NNSA nuclear weapons laboratories.

**Environmental Management Technology Development:** \$50.0 million added to the environmental management technology development activities.